

*Ex Libris* A LETTER *Bibliotheca*  
TO THE  
GOVERNORS OF BETHLEM HOSPITAL

*Colley. Reg.* CONTAINING  
AN ACCOUNT *Medic. Edin.*  
OF THEIR  
MANAGEMENT OF THAT INSTITUTION

FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS ;

ELUCIDATED BY

Original Letters and Authentic Documents ;

WITH A  
CORRECT NARRATIVE  
OF THE

CONFINEMENT OF JAMES NORRIS,

BY ORDER OF THEIR SUB-COMMITTEE ;

AND

Interesting Observations  
ON

THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

By JOHN HASLAM, M. D.

PART I.

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Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid  
Veri non audeat.—Cic.

“ I therefore must think, Sir, that these gentlemen (Dr. Monro and  
“ Mr. Haslam) who are both highly classically and medically educated ;  
“ and, in my judgment, both possessing great skill in the department  
“ of medical science which they profess, have been ALTOGETHER SACRI-  
“ FICED TO PUBLIC CLAMOUR AND PARTY SPIRIT.

*Vide a letter to Sir R. C. Glyn, by James Upton, Esq.,  
a governor of Bethlem Hospital, and a member of  
the Committee, page 14—1216—Rivington's.*

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A

## LETTER.

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GENTLEMEN,

For many and sufficient reasons the publication of the following letter has been delayed until the present moment. Considering the uncertainty of life, I was induced to forego all personal considerations until I had communicated some opinions on professional subjects, which had long occupied my reflections. These have been submitted to the public under the titles of "Considerations on the Moral Management of Insane Persons," and "Medical Jurisprudence as it relates to Insanity according to the Law of England." It appeared to me that the lapse of a portion of time might convey a more favourable impression of the motives which impelled me to address you, and also contribute to procure a more patient attention to my narrative. This interval has enabled me to collect the public sentiment on your proceedings, to examine without danger the reports of a higher tribunal, and likewise to avail myself of

B

the advice of many dear and intelligent friends, who, with one voice, have counselled me to the present undertaking.

It is sincerely my wish that you should feel the present address to be wholly exempt from hostility and resentment ; that it should merely be regarded as an honest and honorable defence of character, which it is the duty of every man to protect whenever it is secretly traduced or openly invaded. It is therefore important that I should exhibit a faithful portraiture of my official conduct, that the public may judge whether I have merited the treatment I have experienced from you. To the members of my own profession I am solemnly engaged to expunge the slightest blot, which ignorance has shed, or malevolence may have endeavoured to fix on my medical reputation; and, lastly, as a parent, it is due to my children, to convince them that the pure precepts they have received for their moral advancement, have been exemplified in the conduct of their father.

Perhaps no instance of disease has ever made a more forcible impression on the public mind than the case of James Norris ; and it is my intention, by a correct exposition of facts, to render the impression durable, because its accurate relation will direct the reader where to level censure, and where to confer approbation. This man was admitted into Bethlem Hospital on the 1st of February 1800, and, in consequence of having stabbed the keeper who superintended him,

and manifesting a most ferocious and malignant disposition, was continued in the hospital as a dangerous and incurable lunatic, and placed on that establishment on the 14th of February, of the following year. From the peculiar construction of his wrists, which prevented him from being secured by manacles, he was subjected, by your orders, and by the sanction of your authority, to a novel and rigorous mode of restraint, *in preference* to the mild and humane contrivance which I had proposed for his security and comfort. To avoid unnecessary repetition, these circumstances will be accurately detailed as the narrative advances. In the year 1814, the case of Norris was mentioned in the House of Commons, in terms which conveyed the severest reprehension of the manner in which he was confined. These animadversions were properly, and, I believe, accurately reported in the daily and weekly newspapers. In a very short time the case of Norris was generally circulated, his portrait was exhibited in many of the print-shops, together with the iron apparatus by which he was pinioned, and to which he was fastened. At length the Secretary of State,\* astonished at your supineness and indifference, when the reputation of the hospital was attacked from all quarters, urged you to an investigation, for your own credit, as the guardians of an hospital of royal endowment, and for the satisfaction of the

\* "The charge appeared so formidable that the Secretary of State for the Home Department made a regular official communication to the Governors on the subject."—*Vide Mr. Upton's Pamphlet, p. 8.*



public. Roused by this stimulus a meeting was convened, which consisted of the noblemen and gentlemen whose names are subscribed to the following document. It is right to state that those members of both houses of parliament who were governors, were summoned to attend. This meeting took place at the old hospital in London Wall, on 25th June, 1814, when, after a careful, minute, and impartial investigation, the following report was made.

*Copy of the REPORT from the Committee of Governors of BETHLEM HOSPITAL, to the General Court appointed to inquire into the Case of JAMES NORRIS, one of the Patients confined in Bethlem Hospital.*

## REPORT

Of a select Committee of the Governors of Bethlem Hospital, appointed by a Court held on the 23d June 1814, for the purpose of inquiring into the management of the Hospital and the general health of the patients ; such Committee consisting of twenty-four Governors, being all the Members present at such Court, and also of all the Members of both Houses of Parliament who are Governors of the Hospital, being forty-two in number ; and which select Committee met at the Hospital of Bethlem on the 25th June, and was attended by the following Governors :

SIR RICHARD CARR GLYN, Baronet, President.  
 RICHARD CLARK, Esq. Chamberlain of London,  
 Treasurer.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury.  
 Right Hon. Lord Willoughby de  
 Brooke.

Right Hon. Lord Dynevor.  
 Sir Walter Stirling, Bart. M.P.  
 Sir John Perring, Bart. M. P.  
 Charles Mills, Esq. M. P.  
 Charles Barratty, Esq.  
 Hugh Powell, Esq.  
 James Upton, Esq.  
 David Caddell, Esq.  
 William Wix, Esq.  
 John Birch, Esq.  
 William Drewe, Esq.  
 T. C. Glyn, Esq.  
 John Leech, Esq.  
 Charles Hoppe, Esq.  
 Thomas Hunter, Esq.

This Committee having been informed, that they were convened in consequence of certain statements having lately appeared in the public papers, which involved the general charge of cruelty and mismanagement towards the patients in Bethlem Hospital, and also the particular charge of one of such patients having been for many years confined in irons in a manner repugnant to humanity, and not warranted by the necessity of the case, proceeded to in-

quire into the correctness of such statements, and for that purpose examined the Physician, Apothecary, Steward, and Keepers of the Hospital, and also received the information of such of the Governors as have been for many years past in the habit of attending the weekly Committees when patients are received and discharged, and also of going over the Hospital and viewing the state of the patients; and with respect to the general charge of cruelty and bad management, this Committee is of opinion on the fullest consideration, That no foundation whatever exists for such charge, it appearing, in addition to the personal knowledge of the Governors themselves, that no complaints have been made of inhumanity or ill treatment, either by the patients or their friends, the former of whom are invariably asked on their discharge, in the presence of the weekly Committee, in what manner they have been treated while in the Hospital, and whether they have any complaints to make; and the friends and relatives of the patients having at all times, both during and after the confinement, the opportunity of preferring any complaints either to the Committees, Sub-Committees, or Courts of the Hospital, or to the very numerous individual Governors, while it appears, that neither of such modes of appeal have in any instances been resorted to.

That in the opinion of this Committee, every attention has on the contrary been paid in the Hospital to the cleanliness, the health, and the comfort of the patients confined therein, and that every degree of indul-



gence consistent with the security of the patients and the safety of those employed has been observed ; and it is further the opinion of this Committee, that on a fair comparison with any other Lunatic Asylums in this country, the Hospital of Bethlem would be found to possess equal if not superior claims to public estimation ; and they believe they may with confidence appeal to the general opinion, having for the space of nearly three centuries borne testimony to the correctness of this statement.

The Committee, however, attribute the imputation of undue rigour which has recently gone forth, to a regulation of the Hospital which has been long since acted upon, although not sufficiently considered by objectors, namely, that no patients are admitted as incurable patients, unless satisfactory proof is produced that they are absolutely mischievous and dangerous to others and themselves, a rule, which while it affords additional security to the public, in preserving many lives, and also increased advantage to relatives, in relieving them of so calamitous a charge, does yet involve this necessary consequence, that more restraint must in the generality of such cases become necessary, than in the cases of patients who are not so mischievously disposed, and who rarely meditate any attempt upon the lives of others. While therefore it is considered that no fewer than one half of the patients, both male and female, at present in the Hospital are incurable patients, and so in the main continue ; it is apprehended that such circumstance should be borne

in mind, lest due allowance for the restraint under which they may be found should fail to be made.

This Committee secondly proceeded to investigate the particular case of James Norris, and they found with respect to such patient as follows :—

That he was first admitted into the Hospital as a curable patient on the 1st of February, 1800, and reported uncured on the 7th day of February, 1801, and then received as a dangerous and incurable lunatic on the 14th February, 1801. That from the last mentioned period he evinced repeated symptoms of a malignant and ferocious disposition, and that two years after he was admitted an incurable (viz. in the year 1803), he stabbed William Howkins, one of the keepers, with a knife, which had been incautiously left by a relative of a patient when visiting the Hospital, and that upon one of the patients going to the relief of such keeper he stabbed him also, neither of the wounds however having proved fatal; it is also believed, that he at the same time attempted the life of a third person. That upon these attempts he was more closely confined, but not in the mode which was afterwards adopted, and which will be hereafter more particularly mentioned. That from the period of his attempting the lives of the keepers, he appears to have lost no opportunity of committing acts of violence and mischief, having particularly a habit of darting forward in a sudden and unexpected manner upon such persons as came within his reach, and

repeatedly threatening their lives, as well as frequently throwing violently at them whatever articles came in his way, and were likely to effect his purpose. That his bodily strength being considerable, and his cunning and dexterity greater than those of any other patient, he became a terror to every person whose duty or inclination brought them into the Hospital; one instance of mischief in particular having been the biting off the finger of a man named Thompson, and more of which instances might be particularized if necessary. That upon iron handcuffs having been placed on his wrists for the purpose of restraining him, he was enabled to extricate himself from them with ease, by passing his hand through them in consequence of a peculiar conformation, his wrists being larger than the bones of his hands, and which instruments were then converted by him into dangerous weapons, and thrown at others. That at length all the ordinary modes of confinement known in the Hospital having been resorted to in vain, a representation was made by the Medical Officers to the Weekly Committee of the Governors, in the beginning of June, 1804, stating that some further confinement had become necessary in this particular case, and their opinion was taken as to the best method of restraint. A proposal appears to have been at the same time submitted to the Committee by the Medical Officers, for allowing two apartments to the patient, as night and day rooms, communicating by a door between them, which it was conceived would answer the purpose of security; but on account of the way in which

the Hospital was kept constantly filled by patients from the Army and Navy, it was not thought advisable to adopt this plan, as the employment of the rooms would necessarily prevent some one patient from being maintained in the Hospital, for the whole period during which Norris might remain there; and the Committee therefore did not consider themselves justified in excluding another patient on his account; some alternative then became necessary, and it appears, that on the 16th June, 1804, an apparatus of iron was submitted to the Committee, which sat on that day for their approbation, consisting of three distinct parts—First, a collar encircling the neck, and confined by a chain to a stauncheon or pole fixed at the head of the patient's bed, leaving him at liberty to rise, to lie down, to turn himself in, and to stand near or sit down upon his bed, but not to depart further from it;—Second, an open worked frame, the lower part of which encircled the body, and the upper part of which passed over the shoulders, having on either side apertures for the arms, which encircled them above the elbow, but left the lower part of the arms hanging down, and at liberty, so that while the act of throwing, or other violence, was prevented, the patient was enabled to feed himself, to keep himself clean, and to assist himself in the ordinary evacuations of nature;—and Third, a chain passing from the angle of the patient to the foot of the bed, by which, additional security appears to have been obtained, and the habit of kicking (to which the patient was particularly addicted) was restrained. The Committee



of the 16th June, on considering such contrivance, came to the following Resolution, which is entered in the Minute Book of that date, viz. "It appearing  
 "to the Committee, that James Norris, one of the  
 "patients, is a very violent and dangerous lunatic,  
 "and had several times done mischief to the servants ;  
 "Ordered, that he be put in the iron apparatus prepared for him, and approved by Dr. Monro, and  
 "the Committee, under the direction of the Medical  
 "Officers."

This Committee further inquired, whether, during any period of the above mode of confinement having been in use, any handcuffs or other fetters for the hands had been ever used, and they ascertained that they had not.

This Committee then proceeded to examine the iron-work in question, and upon the fullest inquiry and consideration, they are of opinion, that presuming the idea of the double cell not to have been acted upon, no better mode could have been devised for securing a patient of so dangerous a description, with equal advantage to himself, it appearing to them, that neither pressure nor pain have been occasioned by any part of such restrictions, there being less of friction and excoriation produced by a metallic substance, if properly adapted to the purpose of confinement, supposing such confinement to be of a permanent nature, than from ligatures formed of other materials, even admitting that the latter would afford equal security.



The Committee further find, that no complaint whatever has been made by the patient himself, either of pressure or pain, during the whole period of his confinement; and that his bodily health does not appear to this Committee to have suffered during that time in any degree from that cause; that he has been enabled at all times to feed himself, and to assist himself, in his evacuations, neither of which advantages would have been possible, if he had been confined in a strait waistcoat, even supposing that such a mode of confinement would have been sufficient for his security (which in his case, it does not appear that it would even for a single week;) and that therefore, however unsightly in itself, such a method of restraint as that now under consideration may be, and however painful may be the reflection, that it should in any single instance become necessary to employ it, *this Committee is notwithstanding of opinion, that the peculiar nature of the case before them did justify its application, in this particular instance,* and that so far from having been attended with the effects which have been attributed to it, it appears to have been upon the whole rather a merciful and humane, than a rigorous and severe imposition; its use having, as to this patient, been warranted by the circumstances which have been detailed, and that in all probability the lives of others have been saved by its adoption.

This Committee however finding on their investigation, that part of the above-mentioned iron-work,

namely, the frame work of the body, had been removed from the patient, proceeded to inquire at what time, on what account, and by whose orders this alteration had taken place; and on particular inquiry into this part of the subject, they found that it had been removed by the Keeper on the 17th May last, in consequence of a written order from the Apothecary, of which the following is a Copy:—

“ *To J. Blackburne.*”

“ Let the body-irons be taken off from Norris, as they do not seem to afford any security.”

(Signed) “ *J. Haslam*”

17th May, 1814.

On inquiring into the reasons of such order having been given, the Committee found that it was in consequence of the Keeper (Blackburne) having represented to the Apothecary, that the patient was able to get his arms out of the apertures which have been mentioned, from the circumstance of his having of late become somewhat thinner than he was, and that, one of the chief objects of that part of the confinement having the security of the arms, the Apothecary had considered it would be unnecessary to continue such restriction at all, longer than it was found sufficient to answer the purpose for which it was designed, particularly when the Keeper, whose personal safety was most in question, appeared satisfied that it might be safely dispensed with. On further inquiring as to

the present state of health of the patient, it appeared to this Committee, that he had not been altogether in as good health of late as he had been for the fourteen preceding years of his confinement in the Hospital, and that the statement of his having recently become thinner was correct, but that he was by no means seriously out of health at this time, nor had he been so at any period of his confinement; neither did it appear to this Committee, that the particular mode of his confinement has had any effect in producing either the thinness or the change in his general health, which have been adverted to.

The Committee were further desirous of ascertaining whether the statement made by the Keeper to the Apothecary, and under which the order for removing part of the confinement had been given, was owing to a simple conviction on the part of the Keeper that such portion of the confinement had really become unnecessary, or whether he had acted from any other motives in making such application to the Apothecary; and the Committee are induced to think, that although that application by the Keeper might have been quickened by his having heard some remarks as to Norris, from persons visiting the patients, yet that he had for some time before intended to apply to the Apothecary, and that such application was not in consequence of those remarks, but would have taken place if they had never been made.

Upon the whole, this Committee are of opinion,

that it cannot be satisfactorily established, either that any cruelties have been ever practised in Bethlem Hospital, as has been recently stated, or that the case of James Norris in particular, which has been selected as an instance in support of such statement, affords any proof to that effect; and upon the fullest consideration which the Committee has been able to give to the charge, as comprising both these particulars, they beg leave to represent it to the Court of Governors as their decided opinion, *That no foundation whatever exists for the imputation which has been made, and that on the contrary, the general management of the Hospital, as affecting the health, the cleanliness, and the comfort of the patients, is of a nature creditable to the Governors and others concerned in its administration, and such as would not suffer upon a comparison with any other institution of a similar description.*

(Signed)

R. C. GLYN, President.

R. CLARK, Treasurer.

SHAFTESBURY.

DYNEVOR.

WILLOUGHBY DE BROOKE.

W. DREWE.

HUGH POWELL.

JOHN BIRCH.

JAMES UPTON.

CHARLES HOPPE.

DAVID CADDELL.

J. LEECH.



T. C. GLYN.

THO. HUNTER.

WALTER STIRLING.

JOHN PERRING.

CHARLES MILLS.

WILLIAM WIX.

CHARLES BARATTY.

I do hereby certify, that the above is a true Copy.

*John Poynder, Clerk.*

This report, the produce of patient and accurate enquiry, by persons of distinguished rank, character, and talent, was your official reply to the accusations which had been directed against the governors and officers of Bethlem : and it was a rational, as well as the general expectation, that this report would have been promulgated. You, however, to the surprize of every one interested in the welfare of your institution adopted a different line of conduct ; and this report, which constituted your defence, was suffered to stagnate and moulder in the strong box at Bridewell. In this torpid state probably it would have remained to the present hour, had not its existence been alluded to nearly a year afterwards, viz. on the 10th May, 1815, by one of the Committee of the House of Commons, during my examination before that tribunal.\*

Gentlemen, you are the governors of a royal esta-

\* Vide First Parliamentary Report 1815, page 64.



blishment for the treatment of insanity, and then received into your institution the maniacs from the army; and navy, and those who were sent by the Secretary of State. It was, therefore, a friendly admonition,—a benevolent solicitude,—as well as an act of duty, in that high official character, when a “*formidable charge*” was levelled against your hospital, to interfere, and thereby afford you an opportunity to repel the accusation. The Secretary of State could not provoke you to reply, merely for his individual gratification, but for your honor and character, as a royal foundation, and for the satisfaction of the public. This gentleman, together with those who had signed your report, little expected that a vindication, which ought to have been notorious, would have dwindled into a silent record. With able advocates, and a prepared defence you allowed judgment to go against you by default—you suffered yourselves to be impressed with your protection in your pocket,—after having exhibited the parade of resistance, you became panic-struck at the shadow of your enemy. Of this report, a copy ought to have been transmitted to every governor, and likewise circulated through the same channels which brought the accusation. This was at least due to the noblemen and gentlemen who signed the report, and to the court which confirmed it. Thus, from the negligent or studied concealment of a public document, you have not only permitted, but sanctioned, the discredit that has been heaped upon you.

On the report itself I shall not expatiate, further than to demonstrate from undeniable facts, that the unfortunate James Norris was incarcerated in the iron bondage that enveloped him, by the express order of your sub-committee, on the 16th June, 1804, officially minuted in the following words:—"It appearing to the *Committee*, that James Norris, one of the patients, is a very violent and dangerous lunatic, and had several times done mischief to the servants; ordered, that he be put in the IRON APPARATUS prepared for him, and approved by Dr. Monro and the COMMITTEE, under the direction of the medical officers." Previously to the introduction of this iron machinery, I had proposed to the sub-committee, that this violent and dangerous lunatic should be allowed two cells, or keeping strictly to the words of the report, "two apartments, as night and day rooms, communicating by a door between them, which it was conceived would answer the purpose of security." The adoption of this plan would have been attended with the following advantages—that the lunatic would have been kept perfectly secure and healthy, without any personal restraint. The two apartments would have ensured cleanliness and ventilation; and for the purposes of exercise, he might have been allowed to walk guarded by an occasional strait-waistcoat. When the usual implements of restraint, for violent and dangerous maniacs, namely manacles, were inapplicable to Norris, from the peculiar construction of his wrists, I made application to your sub-committee, according to my duty, that some more efficient means ought to

be contrived : for had this man actually killed, either governor, officer, servant, or patient—and such destruction he constantly meditated ; you would doubtless have inculpated me for not having taken the precaution to submit his case to your consideration. It also appears from this report, that when the iron apparatus became insufficient for his security, I immediately directed it to be removed. To have attempted it before, would have been a countermand of your express and written orders, which I have never been known to disobey. After much reflection, this was the only plan I could devise ; and subsequent consideration has satisfied me that it is the only contrivance that ought to be resorted to under similar circumstances.\* But to this plan your sub-committee objected ; they refused to listen to the suggestions of experience ; and to the dereliction of medical opinion gave directions to the SMITH, “ to fasten him (Norris) in some way, that he should do no person a mischief.”† When I found this sub-committee determined to reject the mild security which I had proposed, and confined the manner of his restraint to the inventive faculties of the smith ;‡ I became anxious that my name

\* It affords me considerable satisfaction to find that Dr. Parkman, of Boston, in the United States, has adopted this mild and efficient plan, and has given a drawing of it in his *Management of Lunatics*, p. 27.—Boston, 1817.

† First Report of Minutes of Evidence from Committee on Mad-houses 1816, p. 43.

‡ Question. Did you make irons for a patient in Bethlem, of the name of Norris ?—Answer. I did.

should not be implicated in the transaction, and therefore earnestly requested them \* to enter a minute in their sub-committee book, to demonstrate at any future period, that the contrivance which they had confided to the invention of the smith, had been sanctioned with their approbation. “ It appearing to the Committee, that James Norris, one of the patients, is a very violent and dangerous lunatic, and had several times done mischief to the servants; ordered, that he be put into the iron apparatus prepared for him, and approved by Dr. Monro and the Committee, under the direction of the medical officers.” This minute, according to the standing rules and orders of the Royal Hospitals of Bridewell and Bethlem, must have been read at the next Bethlem committee, and likewise, AUDIBLY† at the next general court. When the governors visited the hospital, as a subject of curiosity, which frequently occurred, they must have noticed Norris; and when the Bethlem sub-committee, according to their duty, inspected the hospital and patients once a month, they must have viewed him, and the apparatus in which he was confined, more than an

Question. By whose directions?—Answer. By order of the Committee; I have my book here, which I beg to produce.

Question. By whose order did you make those additional irons, of which you are now about to speak?—Answer. By order of the Committee.—*Vide Parliamentary Report, 1816, p. 42.*

\* *Vide Parliamentary Report, Part 1st—1815. Page 65.*

† *Vide Rules and Orders, printed 1792.*



hundred times, as he continued under this formidable restraint from June 1804 to May 1814, a period of nearly ten years. Let me now ask, after this reference from sub-committee to general committee, and from general committee to general court, which confirmed this minute; after this reiterated inspection, is there any minute or record on any of your books, to shew that you, as the governors, were dissatisfied with, or repented of, the iron apparatus you had hitherto approved? there is nothing of the kind in existence.

That I have always been the advocate of a lenient treatment of the insane, is public and notorious; for in the year 1798, before the admission of Norris, I had the honor to dedicate to the governors of Bethlem Hospital, the first fruits of my experience on the subject of mental derangement, entitled "Observations on Insanity," in which I had considerable satisfaction in making known to you, in contradistinction to the practice which had prevailed, that "speaking of the effects of management on a very extensive scale, I can truly declare, that by gentleness of manner and kindness of treatment, I have never failed to obtain the confidence, and conciliate the esteem of insane persons; and have succeeded by these means in procuring from them respect and obedience. There are certainly some patients who are not to be trusted, and in whom malevolence forms the prominent feature of their character: such persons should always be kept under a certain restraint; but this is not incompatible with *kindness* and *humanity*. I shall now take leave



of the case of James Norris, trusting that I have proved most satisfactorily, that your sub-committee were the authors of his rigorous confinement, which, on their own comparison, they preferred to the lenient, wholesome and efficient restraint which I had submitted to their notice. This iron machinery, which they had approved and ordered, was so complicated, that it employed the smith, with filing, bolting, screwing, hammering, clinching and basilling, nearly two hours in adjusting ; so that if a fire had occurred, he must have perished in the flames ; and his bones would have been calcined at the stake which held him.

Gentlemen, in the year 1815, “ a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to consider of provisions being made for the better regulation of Madhouses in England.” Previously to this appointment, however, there had been diffused a considerable mass of information relative to abuses which had prevailed in the receptacles for the insane. The floating dense and black cloud which burst on many of these metaphysical retreats, had also shed some of its baneful contents on the venerable fabric of Bethlem Hospital. As I was not deaf, I had frequently heard the rolling of the distant thunder, and at intervals distinctly perceived some vivid flashes, which strongly indicated the approaching storm. But of its effects I was fearless, and rather courted its explosion, than wished it to be silently conducted. There was nothing in the range of my own department, that would not bear the fullest exposure, and from such develop-

ment my expectations were credit and applause ; and a continuance of that favor and protection, which I had uninterruptedly enjoyed during the long period of twenty years. But this firm and unshaken state of my own nerves at impending inquiry, derived no corroboration from the feelings of others composing your establishment. When it was understood that a visit to Bethlem was to be expected from certain members of Parliament, a shyness prevailed, an apprehension was manifested, which convinced me that these gentlemen were no welcome acquaintance. On the date subscribed, I received from your worthy clerk, the following official letter.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received *private information* of its being the intention of some members of the House of Commons, to visit Bethlem to-day. I write by desire of the Treasurer, to say, that it appears to him very important, that you should (without *appearing* to be there on purpose) be in the way when these gentlemen arrive. It is possible that *much may depend* upon it ; and I trust it will be in your power to be there.

Yours truly,

JOHN POYNDER,

25 May, 1814.

Bridewell Hospital.

*J. Haslam, Esq.*

With these directions I strictly complied ; and remained where my orders had stationed me, from ten in the morning; until eight at night, when the patients retire to rest. But during this long interval of waiting, I was unable to comprehend the precise meaning and tendency of this mysterious epistle. I reflected, that something of ultimate importance was afloat, to render it expedient to obtain *private information*—to send out scouts, listeners, and evesdroppers, to worm from members of Parliament, the secret of their visit to Bedlam. I felt much flattered that this delicate business was confided to my diplomacy, although I was ignorant of the whole affair, and no directions were given to me what to say ; and yet much depended on my being there. At length a ray of intelligence beamed on my conjectures—I was not to *appear to be there on purpose*. This gleam was but momentary ; for when I considered how it was to be effected, that the members of the House of Commons should be persuaded that my presence was purely accidental, when it had been previously contrived, was a difficulty that overwhelmed me in utter darkness. It occurred to me, that the author of the letter could entertain no exalted opinion of the sagacity of these parliamentary gentlemen, to suppose they would attribute premeditation to chance ;—and if they did not deceive themselves, was it to be expected that, by a direct falsity, I should endeavour to beguile them ? It is proper to inform you, that after continuing steadily at my post for ten hours, notwithstanding the reliance which I placed on the *private information*, the members of the House of

Commons never appeared. It is stated in the letter, that this clumsy, and I think impracticable manœuvre, was to be performed by the desire of your Treasurer ; but of this I entertain considerable doubt. That the Treasurer of your hospital, the Chamberlain of London, a gentleman of the strictest integrity, and most honorable character ;—a lover of truth, both from its intrinsic value, and the moral advantages which it propagates, should ever have counselled those, whose conduct he regulated by his superior office, to practise a low and disgraceful deception is incredible. It is a libel on that purity of conduct to which I have looked up for more than twenty years, with undeviating reverence ; I repeat, I cannot believe it.

But the same alarm at visitation continued to prevail ; and in a few days afterwards, the following letter remanded me to my post.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Bennet, a member of the House of Commons, who *will be against us in the House on Friday, if he is not with us*, means to visit Bethlem this morning at or about 11. The Treasurer thinks with myself, that it may be of much importance that you should be there. You will find him a gentleman, and a man of sense.

8th June 1814.

J. Haslam, Esq.

Immediate.

Yours ever,

JOHN POYNTER.



On this letter very few remarks are required. There is no mention, as in the former, of "*private information*," and which having been unfounded, was, of course, useless. Here the intention of an individual member is stated, and the hour of his visit fixed. An important and consoling logical conclusion is also deduced, which points out this gentleman's decisiveness of character, to be incompatible with any of the amiable weaknesses of a compromising neutrality ; for it is stoutly predicted, *that he would be against us if he were not with us*. That Mr. Bennet is a man of sense, seems to follow, as he never came when he was expected. How my worthy friend Mr. Poynder obtained this information, I will not venture to inquire ; but it is evident from these letters, that a parliamentary visit to Bethlem Hospital, was anticipated with considerable anxiety and circumspection.

Respecting the parliamentary inquiry, it would be irrelevant to consider it beyond my own examination. The report of that Committee has been published, and is accessible for every person to form his own sentiments. There may be some errors, but they are not of any importance. It was the general opinion, after my examination was concluded, that I had acquitted myself with firmness and perspicuity before that tribunal. My answers contained the TRUTH ; for I had no motive for concealment : and if the same questions were put again, I would reply in the same words. However favourable the impression of my examination might be on the general mind ; whatever satisfaction I



might feel from the partial interpretation of acquaintances or the eulogy of friends; I was fully aware that the true criterion was the estimate which you, as the governors of the hospital, might form on the subject. I was your officer, and to you alone I was responsible for my conduct. To solicit such testimonial would have discovered an anxiety I did not feel; and appeared irreconcilable with the confidence I experienced from having performed my duty. Very fortunately, an occasion shortly presented itself to confirm my own opinion, and the judgment of my friends. On Saint Matthew's day, which occurs on the 21st September, a feast is annually held by the governors of Bridewell and Bethlem. On this occasion, in the year 1815, *after* my examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, and the circulation of their printed report, I was particularly gratified by the following incident. To this feast many members of the committee of city lands were invited, as a mark of respect, and as an opportunity for the transfer of grateful feeling, for their co-operation and kindness in the disposal of some ground in St. George's fields, appertaining to the City of London—distinguished by its marshy situation and moist atmosphere, as the eligible position of new Bethlem. After the usual toasts (which are always the conveyance of the pure sentiments of loyalty and benevolence) had been circulated in bumpers, (for on these cheerful occasions your charity abhors a vacuum;) a gentlemen, John Atkins, Esq. one of the members for the city, a governor of the hospital, and an Alderman of London, rose, and after adverting to the

severe and protracted examinations I had undergone before a committee of Parliament, and being kindly pleased to animadvert on the firmness and ability evinced in my replies, proposed in a full meeting of your body, that my health should be drunk. This was immediately complied with: and in my grateful return for the flattering encomium I had experienced, I was neither unmindful of the obligations due to the urbanity and liberal feelings of the mover, nor wanting in respect to the governors, who had unanimously concurred with the proposal. It is but justice to observe, that to Mr. Alderman Atkins, I was personally unknown.

This *public* stamp of your approbation of my conduct, I am proud to confess was most welcome, because I had on all occasions endeavoured to deserve it; and it conferred a purer pleasure, as it was neither the tribute of friendship, nor the produce of solicitation, but originated from the spontaneous dictate of an honorable and independent mind.

In the sequel it will be found that this triumph was of very limited duration; and that the eminence I had attained, served only to accelerate my descent. It is not now the moment to philosophize on the uncertainty of Fame, or to consult the registers of her temple, in order to lament the transitory existence, or untimely end of reputation; such investigation would be a melancholy picture of “the last infirmity of noble minds,” yet, I may be permitted to remark, after an attentive

observation of many thousand cases of insanity, that I never witnessed a single instance of a patient so shattered in his intellects as to project an office for the insurance of popularity.

To those who have perused the Parliamentary Reports, it will be evident that little courtesy was extended to the medical officers of Bethlem Hospital, and the same remark has been made by Mr. Upton.\* Liberal inquiry did not appear to be their object, and information seemed only desirable, as it might constitute the vehicle of censure. These gentlemen had an unquestionable right to ask any questions, indeed such as might be suggested to them by misconception or prejudice:—they might even calumniate under the Ægis of privilege.

With regard to my own examinations, I am perfectly content. The questions, as I expected, were generally obscure. It was rather a cross examination on something that floated in the imagination, than an examination in chief. With these honorable gentlemen, the question was not the quantum of good we had produced, but the abuses which were supposed to prevail. On some occasions I had hoped to communicate useful information, but this was disregarded or silenced. If the lunatics in Bethlem were not constantly drenched

\* "From the nature of the questions, which did not naturally arise out of the evidence, there was something of a disposition to prejudice the medical officers."—*Vide Letter to Sir R. C. Glyn, p. 9.*

with medicine, it was inferred that they were neglected : and when remedies were administered by the sanction of extensive and successful practice, it was concluded that they were prescribed as a punishment. The ebullitions of fury from the natural violence of the disorder, were supposed to arise from the provocations of the keeper ; and the necessary restraint which protected others and themselves, was attributed to feelings of revenge. The numbers cured, excited no curiosity, but the deaths were hunted out with anxious solicitude.

You will perhaps be surprised to learn, that the basis of this examination, as far as it related to Bethlem Hospital, was furnished by the manuscript of a madman, who, foiled in his attempts, to foist his dis-tempered fancies on your medical officers, with that cunning and malevolence which often form striking features in the character of the insane, commenced a systematic volume of abuse against your institution, and its medical establishment. This manuscript was composed by James Tilly Matthews, a lunatic confined in your hospital. I had often heard him threaten to make it public, and on one occasion, pluming himself on the retaliation he could make for the supposed injuries he had received, he read to me the greater part of it. As this manuscript was only the record of delusions which constituted his disorder, and formed the staple of his discourse—as its burthen was a series of imaginary grievances and pretended abuses, thoroughly impregnated with a rancorous hostility against those who were the authors of his seclusion ;



and as it bore on its face the image and superscription of madness, I conceived that its circulation ought not to be prevented, on the presumption, that there existed in the judgment of those who passed for persons of sound mind, a sufficient disrelish for absurdity, to enable them to discriminate the transactions of day-light, from the materials of a dream. But in this I was unhappily mistaken ; and had I profited by the errors of others, I should have acted with greater circumspection. Mr. Tooke, somewhere in his *Diversions of Purley*, acknowledges that in the outset and progress of his career, he was guilty of two most egregious blunders ; namely, “ by attributing a much greater portion of virtue to individuals, and of understanding to the generality, than any experience of mankind can justify.” This manuscript had, however, fascinated certain of the honorable members of the mad-house committee ; it had been carefully perused, and doubtless fully digested ; for I found the questions proceed in the same order they were detailed in the lunatic’s journal ; in some of their enquiries they condescended to employ his peculiar expressions : and in one instance, an honorable member left his seat to refresh his recollection at this authentic source. To this gentleman, I had lent the case of Matthews, published under the title of “ *Illustrations of Madness*,” who, when he had perused it, politely returned it, with the following letter.

SIR,

I return your *Illustrations* with many thanks ;

that, by the documents you have produced, the *Insanity of Matthews is completely established, I readily admit*, and without claiming any merit whatever from the concession ; as, were I ever so much disposed to take part with his friends and advocates, in endeavouring to establish a charge of misconduct against the managers of Bethlem, I should not think it at all necessary to contend for his having been *free* from mental disorder; it might be quite sufficient to shew, that his derangement *did not require the species or degree of confinement to which he was subjected.\** Into this controversy I am not now about to enter, or to attempt to reconcile the varieties either of testimony or opinion which appear to prevail. I intend at present chiefly to remark on his DETENTION. It appears to me that when a person is confined on an allegation of lunacy, if the friends apply for his release, under the conviction, *however erroneous*, either of his *sanity* or of *improper treatment*, and when to ascertain the fact, they send physicians to examine into it, they are entitled to *demand* and to *receive* from *those who take upon themselves to detain the party*, the most convincing proofs of his derangement which can be

\* Mr. Smith has omitted to consider that his protégé was a pauper lunatic, sent by the parish of Camberwell ; and that Bethlem Hospital, by its constitution, acknowledged no distinction of persons. The circumstances of being poor and mad, furnished the requisite passport. There were no separate apartments appropriated for the residence of oratorical, philosophical, or political maniacs—it formed a species of republic, dispensing equal rights to those who were “of imagination all compact.”

afforded ; that they ought to be cheerfully and readily furnished with every clue which can lead to a right judgment of the case, by detecting and exposing the subject on which the mind is disordered, instead of having *information withheld*, under any pretence, and especially for the purpose of defeating the application. It is unquestionably right that dangerous maniacs should not be permitted to remain at large : but it is surely of at least equal importance to the community, and particularly to the *sane* part of it, that *they* should not be liable to *improper* confinement—either as to *cause*, *severity*, or *duration*.\* *I strongly suspect that*, in many instances, *the confinement has proved its own justification by producing madness where before there existed only a disposition to it, or at most only its slightest shades : indeed it seems to me so probable an effect, as that I should scarcely wonder if it constantly occurred, whenever the temper was at all irritable*. I observe in your relation of Matthews's case, that whatever was the nature of his delusion, when first taken into Bethlem, the train of disturbed ideas on which the proof of his subsequent insanity appears chiefly to rest, is at least evidently connected with his detention there, *if not actually caused by it*.† London Wall was the supposed residence of his tor-

\* This is a generous presumption that we have no law on the subject of Lunacy.

† As Mr. Smith was unacquainted with the nature of his delusions when first admitted into Bethlem, it is but natural that he should conclude them to have been produced by his confinement.

menters: and his relations naturally express their expectation that his disorder would be diminished by his removal from the scene of the imaginary action ;\* in conformity with which, *it seems*, that when released he was not only wholly inoffensive, but so *rational* and *composed*, as to be trusted *at large*† for a considerable time without the least apprehension or ill consequence—nay, even that others were committed to his charge.

I shall certainly have great pleasure in furnishing you with any information respecting the proceedings of the Committee. Having given an evidence before us, you are of courtesy entitled to the report, which will be sent on your application to the clerk of the committee, Mr. Beeley.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM SMITH.

Park Street, Westminster,  
20th June, 1815.

*To John Haslam, Esq. Bethlem Hospital.*

\* Cælum non animum mutant.

† He was never trusted *at large*, but considered as a patient of Bethlem Hospital transferred to a purer air for the amelioration



This letter of the honorable member, from the surprise it excited, and from the novel cast of its philosophy, has hitherto remained unanswered. Indeed much of it requires no other reply than the more mature reflection of the writer, unaided by those prejudices which seem to have inflamed his zeal, and warbled a requiem to his judgment. Mr. Smith directly acknowledges, "*without claiming any merit whatever from the CONCESSION,*"\* that I have "*completely established the insanity of Matthews,*" and this was the principal object of my publication. Mr. Smith however means chiefly to "remark on his detention. With that however I had no concern, as will appear from the following statement of facts.— He was admitted into Bethlem on the 28th January, 1797. His friends, however, conceived him to be of sane mind, and on the 2d May of the same year he was, by a writ of habeas, brought to the house of the late Lord Chief Justice Kenyon, who, after con-

of his bodily complaints, and in this view his own relations considered him—as they complained that he was not attended by the medical officers of Bethlem. When he was removed, I was desired by the sub-committee to ascertain that the house in which he was placed was sufficiently secure to prevent him from escaping. But these precautions did not prevent some of the members of the mad-house committee from taking him from this seat of confinement, and conveying him to new Bethlem, then unfinished, in order to profit from his architectural criticisms on that building.

\* CONCESSION is perhaps a word of too much authority; for if Mr. Smith has parted with any thing beyond the conviction of his reason, it is CONCESSION, that generates neither gratitude nor respect.

versing with him, ordered him to be taken back to Bethlem. In this instance he was *detained* by the authority of a judge. On the 21st January, 1798, his insanity continuing without abatement, he was placed on the incurable establishment, being deemed an improper person to be entrusted with his liberty. On this establishment he continued without any interference on the part of his relations, fautors, or disciples, for eleven years, namely, until 1809, when his friends again, through the medium of a court of law, applied for his liberation, and which being submitted to the decision of two judges, was not complied with.\* Previously to this decision, you had applied to the Secretary of State for an order to detain him, and had obtained the warrant.—This was your own act, for it must be evident that no secretary of state would have granted such instrument of *detention*, to the bare request of your medical officers; and to them, as individuals, it was of no importance where he was placed, but they considered it a duty to state their opinions concerning his insanity, and to adduce proofs of its mischievous tendency.

But to sum up the circumstances of his *detention*; when his most evident and palpable madness, was by his relations winked at as an interesting and philosophical system, and when they succeeded in procuring two physicians who were induced to swear that he

\* Vide my "Illustrations of Madness," which give the history of his case—Sold by Callow, Crown Court, Sobo.

was of sound mind : the determination of his case was referred to those eminent medical practitioners constituted by act of parliament, and delegated by the College of Physicians, as commissioners for visiting the receptacles for the insane. These gentlemen, after sufficient personal examination of Matthews, did “severally make oath and say, that they had, on Wednesday, the 29th of November, a long examination of the patient James Tilley Matthews, at Bethlem Hospital, and that they took considerable pains in ascertaining the state of his mind, and that it is their positive and decided opinion, as the result of such examination, that the patient is in a most deranged state of intellect, and WHOLLY UNFIT TO BE AT LARGE.”

Sworn at my chambers, Serjeant's Inn, by

Sir Lucas Pepys,  
Robert Darling Willis,  
Samuel Foart Simmons,  
Richard Budd,  
Henry Ainsley,  
James Hayworth,  
William Lambe,  
Richard Powell.

The above-named deponents, this 30th day of November, 1809, before me,

S. LE BLANC.

HIS DETENTION at this period, consequently arose from your acquiescence with the above certificate, which set forth that he was *wholly unfit to be at large*, although you had previously obtained the warrant for his detention. And, finally, to demonstrate that your medical officers never interfered with his custody, the following official letter from your clerk will be a sufficient document. In consequence of an internal abscess and hectic fever which supervened, it was the recommendation of your surgeon, that Matthews should be removed to a purer air; and while this was negotiating, I received the subsequent directions.

DEAR HASLAM,

Pray see Becket\* immediately. He sent for me yesterday to know what Lord S———† was to do about Matthews. I told him he must take him from us, and put him in some *safe place* in the country, if he meant to prevent his going at large. If not, his friends would have him, who do not think him mad, *and will act accordingly*. He wishes to see you, as he thinks you may know some asylum far enough in the country for air; and if so, he thinks, under the very peculiar circumstances of the case of Matthews, perhaps their department may take the *expense* upon them, although it is a new thing to do, and may establish a precedent against them.

\* John Becket, Esq. late Under-Secretary of State.

† Lord Sidmouth, as will be seen by the context.



In short the difficulty and misery that has arisen from this absurdity of the Doctor,\* must be got rid of *in some way or other*;† and I see no better way than in keeping Becket to what he at present proposes.

Your's ever,

10th June, 1813.

J. POYNDER.

*J. Haslam, Esq.*

You must see Becket, so that I may have the Secretary of State's answer before Saturday.

When Mr. Smith says, "I strongly suspect that in many instances the confinement has proved its own justification, by producing madness where before there existed only a disposition to it, or at most its *slightest shades*; indeed it seems to me so probable an effect, as that I should scarcely wonder if it constantly occurred whenever the temper was at all irritable." This strong suspicion which has tainted the mind of Mr. Smith, would, in the estimation of divers philoso-

\* Doctor Monroe had kindly allowed him, although still remaining on the hospital books as a patient, the benefit of a purer atmosphere, for the recovery of his health.—And to this delicate and well turned compliment he cannot be insensible.

† The grasp of the object, without the slightest regard concerning the means of its attainment, appears to have been the sole consideration. Thus, when the unfortunate Norris required additional restraint, the sub-committee directed their smith to fasten him "*in some way or other*," that he should do no person a mischief. Mr. Poynder will kindly forgive a very trite quotation—*Sequitur magistrum passibus æquis*.

phers of the same school, be equivalent to the experience of others: but I still lament for the honor of human nature, and from some frail regard for logical deduction, that this doctrine, not flowing in the clear and full stream of his wonted benevolence, should be founded only in suspicion, and by its avowal he arms me with the only weapon that can be employed against folly and unmanly prejudice. For such a sentiment his utter ignorance of medical subjects, and the nature of the human mind can be his only apology; besides, it militates against his former *concession*, that “dangerous maniacs should not be permitted to remain at large;” and yet the protection which they and the public derive from their seclusion is stated to produce an aggravation of their malady. It is the unanimous opinion of all medical persons who have had any experience of insanity, that the means of cure are most successfully applied at the commencement of the disease; but if the “temper should be at all irritable,” which it constantly is, then the unhappy victim of this calamity is to be abandoned to his own guidance: floating through society without the compass of discretion, or the rudder of reason; in order that in due time he may add to the wreck of incurables: if he should fail to terminate his miseries by suicide, or discover the irritation of his temper by the commission of murder. I shall now respectfully take leave of Mr. William Smith, under the full persuasion that the propagation of such opinions will signally exempt their author from the imputation of the *slightest* shades of mental derangement.

It is sufficiently known that the result of the parliamentary labours of these honorable gentlemen was the production of sundry bills, involving prodigious, but useless expense—of oppressive operation—tending to retard the progress of medical science, and fabricated to confirm and extend the horrors of insanity. Fortunately for the public, these bills, when they ascended into the milder atmosphere of another house, suddenly

*“ Melted into air, into thin air,  
And left not a racke behind.”*

After these parliamentary inquiries had concluded, and a short time previously to the annual election of officers, Mr. George Rose, who had been chairman of the mad-house committee, interfered, and intimated by letter his wish that the medical officers should not be re-elected. In consequence of this mandate a general court was held, but, as the medical officers were excluded from its discussions, you alone are enabled to inform the public of its meritorious proceedings. The result of your deliberations was an order, that the medical officers should peruse the evidence contained in the parliamentary reports, and therefrom select accusations *against themselves*, and then—proceed to refute them!!! This is a strong presumptive proof that you had no charges to bring against them. Your medical officers were ordered to besmear themselves with the parliamentary blacking, and immediately afterwards to apply their own white-wash, while you,

the governors, watched the progress of this dexterous transfiguration.

On this memorable occasion you seemed to have entirely forgotten that you were an assemblage of English gentlemen, living under the salutary influence, and guarded by the protection, of equal laws, which, in their parental embrace, comprehend alike the meanest and most elevated, and of each individual secure the property, the character, and the life. From your respectability, as a body, from the nature of your education, and from your situation in life, you could not be strangers to the practice of English justice. Now, permit me to ask you, if in this country, in all its various courts, civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, or military, a precedent can be found to compel a man to become the assassin of his own character, in order to defend himself against the absence of an accusation? Could you, after the **SOLEMN CHARGE** which has admitted you to become governors of the royal hospitals of Bridewell and Bethlem,\* *a station of great honor and trust, and which will afford you many opportunities of promoting the GLORY OF GOD, and the WELFARE of your fellow creatures*—could you, with this sacred injunction still vibrating in your ears, proceed to an act which was repugnant to every principle of justice, and a mockery of her decent forms? If the reports of the mad-house committee had contained any proofs of the

\* Vide the charge prefixed to rules and orders.



misconduct of your medical officers,\* such delinquency must have been evident to your Committee, who are the managing governors of the hospital, and whose duty it is to examine into the conduct of its officers and servants; these gentlemen, after they had perused the parliamentary reports, if they could have fixed any charge of misconduct, or neglect of duty on their medical officers, would doubtless have selected the specific articles of accusation, and summoned such persons before committee or court to defend themselves against such allegations: it may even be concluded, if any culpability attached to these officers, that the committee, which is denominated "RESPONSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE," would have discovered their misconduct, independently of the parliamentary reports. And if they could, from their own vigilant inspection, or from their perusal of the parliamentary reports, have fixed a charge against them, is it at all likely, without supposing an act of desperation, that they would order the medical officers to accuse themselves?

The 30th of April, 1816, was the day appointed for the performance of this farcical exhibition. A very numerous court was assembled, and to this col-

\* In this part of my narrative, I have been obliged to speak in the plural number. The medical officers were Dr. Monro and myself—and it is to be hoped that this respectable and experienced physician will come forward and refute the calumnies which have been insidiously levelled against his public conduct and professional reputation.

lected body of governors, I had the honor to read my observations on the parliamentary reports. When I had concluded, considerable applause prevailed, which, to a person of more sanguine expectations, might have seemed the harbinger of a prosperous issue. But as publicly drinking my health for the ability with which I sustained my examinations before the madhouse committee, was the flattering precursor of the present disgraceful and humiliating scene, there was no rational inducement to permit the revelry of hope before the mourning of experience. It was ordered to be printed, and circulated among your body. In this defence, I had occasion to advert to the lunatic Matthews; and to expose the foundation of my opinion, that he was an improper person to be trusted with his liberty. I had extracted from his manuscript a political denunciation against the reigning family of this country, in which these royal personages were devoted, after the most cruel tortures, to an ignominious death—this manuscript, with several others of the same violent and implacable tendency, I had brought with me, in order, if one specimen should not be convincing to his disciples, that they might be amply supplied: but, when my defence was delivered to the clerk, in order to be printed, a number of governors surrounded me, and requested me to omit the political denunciation of the lunatic, and by that species of persuasion, which is difficult to discriminate from command, it was accordingly omitted.\*

\* The arguments employed to suppress the political denunciation were, that it might be offensive to this Royal Family, should

At a court which met on the 15th May following, the medical officers, namely, Dr. Monro and myself, were not re-elected. Not having been allowed to be present on this occasion, I am wholly ignorant of the proceedings of that day: but the character of the transaction is so strongly marked by Mr. Upton,\* that I must take the liberty to extract his words: “ Notwithstanding the majority of the governors present, very unexpectedly to many individuals, carried the main question at the last court for the non-election of Dr. Monro and Mr. Haslam, which in my opinion, *did not arise from the business of the day, as expressed in the summons, overlooking the usual notice of the day of election* ; I must confess that, upon a careful and impartial review of the whole of the circumstances, aided by a professional experience of more than thirty years in this great city, and by information derived from attendance on the different committees connected with the welfare of the hospital, I CANNOT CONSIDER THAT A FAIR CASE HAS BEEN MADE OUT EITHER AGAINST DR. MONRO OR MR. HASLAM.”

it by chance fall under their perusal. In answer to this, I suggested that all the branches of that illustrious race, would conceive the medical officers had performed their duty in representing to the committee, that a lunatic breathing such vengeance, was an improper person to be set at liberty to put his threats in execution. It was likewise said, that my defence was so satisfactory, that it did not require its introduction, and that the applause with which it had been received, was the strongest confirmation of the sentiments of the court.

\* Letter to Sir R. C. Glyn—p. 13.

Gentlemen, as I have already sufficiently shewn, if mismanagement, derilection of duty, or culpability can be proved, that it is to be attributed to yourselves, and is in no degree imputable to me, I shall now proceed to exhibit a fair but concise view of my official conduct. In order to prove the punctuality with which I performed my duty, I was only three times absent from the weekly sub-committee at Bethlem during the space of twenty-one years, twice from subpoena, and once by indisposition. During the whole of this long period, I was never cited before committee or court, nor has the slightest complaint in any one instance been preferred against me : consult the oldest of your governors, and you will not learn, that their recollection can supply you with an item of my misconduct ; search the minutes of your committee-books, and you will not discover a single entry where my name is coupled with censure or disgrace ; on the contrary, these books contain many reports which I have furnished for the advancement of your establishment, and they record, uninterruptedly for the last sixteen years, the most solid testimony of your approbation of my conduct, by an annual pecuniary grant beyond the fixed sum of my salary, and this token of your liberality and discrimination was continued *after* the publication of the parliamentary report.

To exemplify the interest I felt in the welfare and character of your institution, allow me to observe, that shortly after my appointment, I discovered that



a female patient in your hospital had become pregnant by one of your keepers, and there was good reason to suppose that this was not a solitary instance of such iniquitous conduct. When I had satisfactorily ascertained, by a laborious and painful investigation, which is too indelicate to detail, that she became pregnant during the time she was confided to your charge, I made every effort, that the perpetrator of this shocking offence might be ignominiously dismissed, and with considerable difficulty, I ultimately succeeded ; I say with difficulty, because he had been the footman of a governor. To these strong measures it was but natural I should be impelled both from a sense of my own duty, and from the consideration of your character as the governors of a royal institution. Had such a delinquent been suffered to pass unnoticed and without punishment, he might have repeated his offence with other innocent females under your protection. Under such mismanagement and profligate countenance, what father would have confided his insane but virtuous child to your custody ? what husband his wife ? what brother his sister ? Was the bare chance of restoration to reason, to be purchased by ruin and infamy ? was the unhappy maniac only to be awakened from the dream of imaginary ills, to experience the reality of woe and perpetual disgrace ? was the chaste retreat for the recovery of departed intellect to be defiled with the pollutions of the temple of Paphos ? was the royal hospital of Bethlem, with impunity, to be converted into a brothel ? But I shall draw a veil over these disgusting transactions which unnecessarily in-

volved your hospital in considerable expense for the maintenance of the mother and her offspring ; I say unnecessarily, because the evidence which induced you to displace the culprit, ought at the same time to have saddled him with the cost of his iniquity. Of this disgraceful deed, you will probably discover no traces in your minutes ; for correct information you must apply to the parochial register of Hampton, in Middlesex.

When you were attacked for the detention of the lunatic Matthews, of whose insanity many of your own body entertained a very sparing belief, and others absolutely denied, notwithstanding the great preponderance and authority of medical evidence which had pronounced him a maniac ; at my own expense I published his case, under the title of "ILLUSTRATIONS OF MADNESS," in order to manifest to you, that I had diligently attended to the state of his mind, and to convince the medical profession and the public that he was really insane. This tract contains the peculiar hallucinations which constituted his disorder, and is embellished with a curious plate, after a drawing made by the patient himself. It appeared to me that this was the most satisfactory evidence which could be adduced. The public did not wish to be informed of the interest or facility with which the governors of Bethlem hospital could obtain a warrant from the office of the Secretary of State, to detain Matthews or any other individual ; but the question amounted purely to this,—Was the man mad, or in his senses ?

and that the former was the fact, is now undisputed, and even acknowledged by Mr. W. Smith, “without claiming any merit to himself from the *concession*.” Mr. Upton, in his candid and perspicuous letter, truly observes concerning myself and the “Illustrations,” that he, feeling “not a little indignant at the *unfair* and *illiberal* conduct manifested on this occasion, published a statement of Matthews’s case, in which he animadverted on the conduct of the medical gentlemen who had maintained the sanity of that patient, in language directly calculated to irritate, and to make that, which before was a subject for public justice, now a personal controversy; this, in common with the whole of Mr. Upton’s excellent pamphlet, is strictly and literally true. Matthews had been a patient in Bethlem Hospital for more than sixteen years, during which time I had daily opportunities of conversing with him, and consequently of knowing the disordered state of his mind. Two medical gentlemen, employed by his relations, visited him five or six times, and afterwards made oath that he was in his senses. Knowing from my own observation that, during the long period of his seclusion, he had never experienced a lucid interval, I certainly did feel “not a little indignant” at the misrepresentation of his case, and did, in my publication, employ language, although chastened in its expression, yet, certainly, “directly calculated to irritate,” and for what reason? You, the governors, were accused of unjustly detaining, as a mad man, a person sworn to be in his senses: I, as your officer, published to the world, irrefragable do-

cuments of his insanity.—To exonerate you from the imputation of having abused your charter, by converting an hospital for the remedy of disease, into a fastness for secret imprisonment—a sepulchre in which reason was entombed alive, and, to prevent any calumniator from inscribing on your portals—

“*Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch’ intrate,*”

were the principal motives for that publication : and in so doing I certainly deserved that which I never received, the thanks of your body. The persons on whose conduct I animadverted were wholly unknown to me, consequently towards them I could entertain no private hostility: but jealous of your reputation, and anxious to sustain the credit of your establishment, I certainly created two enemies,—for the ultimate purchase of neglect and ingratitude.

I shall now pass on to the erection of New Bethlem,

“*Built in the eclipse*”—LYCIDAS.

When the old hospital had been considered incapable of further repairs, and it was determined that a new one should be erected, I became anxious that it might be constructed with all the advantages which modern art and extensive experience could supply—that it should be exempt from the numerous defects of the old building, and incorporate the conveniences and improvements which might be derived from similar institutions, both in this country and abroad. For this purpose, at some expense, I procured, both by books and



correspondence, a considerable mass of valuable information :—in order that your new hospital might proudly exemplify the science, and display the enlightened humanity, of the nineteenth century. To promote these attainments my opinion was generally circulated that a premium should be awarded for the best memoir on the desiderata for an hospital for the insane :—because it was evident that an architect, however skilful in his profession, (and the gentleman who filled that office to your institution was eminently distinguished) could have no knowledge of the requisites for the improved treatment of mental disorder ; and if such edifice were constructed without these important considerations and arrangements, the treatment of the patients must partake of the defects of the building. This advice was, however, totally disregarded ; and, without possessing the candidates with any of the requisites whereon they might fabricate their plans, premiums were advertized for the best designs. These of course speedily produced swarms of architectural whims and conceits ; and from these bantlings of fancy, three specimens were selected,—as possessing the highest merit :—by a committee of a few surveyors, who had never themselves undergone the fatigue of contemplating the desiderata. Although the medical officers had never been consulted on this subject, yet to manifest my zeal, and fulfil my sense of duty and attachment to your interest, I drew up some general hints extracted from very copious materials in my possession, which were submitted to several of your body ; and more particularly to your architect, from whom I received the following letter :

DEAR SIR,

I return you your books, with many thanks for the perusal of your excellent remarks, and which I assure you have given me great satisfaction, and some very useful information.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely,

Powis Place,  
December 18, 1805.

J. LEWIS,

This letter is a decisive proof that my best exertions were contributed to the accomplishment of that great design, which ought to have rendered your new hospital the model of succeeding establishments for the treatment of mental disorder. Its ample dome might have been omitted, and its stately columns sacrificed to the conveniences of interior construction. Reflecting minds would have been more satisfied that it should have been the quiet and modest retreat of "severest woe,"—than the ostentatious blazon of national degradation. Had you conceived it necessary to rear your edifice on the wisdom of preconceived arrangements, the improvements I had projected would have displayed an asylum purely charitable, in which medical skill, and experience of the human mind would have co-operated with benevolence for the restoration of reason;—an asylum calculated, by prompt assistance, to meet and alleviate the exigencies

of intellectual calamity,—divested of those repulsive forms, and humiliating submissions, which maintain an invidious aristocracy in the heart of a charitable commonwealth ;—only to be approached by a servile prostration to the supremacy of right worshipfuls, worshipfuls, &c. &c. &c.

It has been a misfortune, which experience has little contributed to avert, that the power to act has too often persuaded its possessor that it also included the ability to perform. When new Bethlem was nearly finished, a project appears to have been afloat to warm it by other means than fires in the different apartments. As I had devoted some time to the acquirement of knowledge on this important subject, I was requested to attend a committee, which assembled for this purpose, at Bridewell, on the 30th of January, 1815. To this meeting various civil engineers presented themselves, and several plans and estimates were sent in. The mode of warming with steam appeared to obtain a preference with the gentlemen who composed this committee, although they candidly acknowledged themselves wholly uninformed on the subject. As I had taken copious notes of the different projects submitted, I respectfully requested the committee to defer their determination, and make further inquiries, assuring them that, in the interval, I would extend my researches, and collect the necessary particulars from philosophical gentlemen, in whose opinions they might confide. It was in consequence settled that I should be summoned to attend

the next meeting of the committee. In the interim, my exertions to collect all useful intelligence were unremitting, and the persons I consulted generally concurred in the impracticability of effecting this object by steam, so as to procure a healthy atmosphere. On inquiring the probable time when the committee would re-assemble, I learned, with some regret, that the meeting had already taken place, and that the contract to warm the hospital by steam had been signed. The result, as you well know, of this hasty and inconsiderate procedure has been a total failure of the contrivance, and the unnecessary lavishment of more than a thousand pounds.

Notwithstanding you have condescended to deprive me of an office, which I held for more than twenty years with unimpeached credit, and with the undeviating sanction of your approbation, by a manœuvre as unprecedented as it was oblique ; it is not within the sphere of your power to bereave me of the experience I have assiduously and painfully accumulated on the subject of insanity, and the various morbid affections of the human mind. For several years I daily passed more than six hours within the walls of your hospital, and have preserved an accurate history of many thousand cases,—constituting a mass of knowledge which will enable me to administer relief to suffering humanity.

After the proofs I have adduced of the rectitude of my own conduct, and of the fidelity with which



I performed my duty; it would be superfluous any longer to occupy your attention; but the emphatic terms in which a most respectable and intelligent medical practitioner, a governor of your hospital, and active member of your general committee, has recorded the non-election of Dr. Monro and myself, that we have been "ALTOGETHER SACRIFICED TO PUBLIC CLAMOUR AND PARTY SPIRIT,"\* not only exempts us from the slightest disgrace, but severely transfers it to those who assumed a power they were unable to justify. In this address it is to be lamented that, in a list so numerous, I cannot institute any discrimination of persons, as there are many among your body who will ever be entitled to my respect and grateful remembrance: some with whom I am in the habits of intimacy, and others who repose confidence in my professional opinion.

If such has been the treatment of the medical officers of your institution, it is but just that the public should be informed of the discrimination you have exercised in rewarding others; in order that a correct estimate may be formed of the manner in which you have administered the duties of your station, according to the solemn charge delivered to you on admission. This charge acquaints you that "the distribution of the revenues designed by royal bounty, and many charitable persons, for those truly noble and excellent purposes, is now about to be committed to your care ;

\* Vide Mr. Upton's Letter, p. 14.

and you are hereby solemnly required and earnestly requested to discharge your duty in this behalf with such conscientious regard, that you may appear with joy at the judgment-seat of CHRIST." To demonstrate the impression which this serious charge has stamped on your recollection, and to exemplify your conformity to the precepts it inculcates, I shall entreat your permission to relate a few instances. There are many of you who must still bear in remembrance the conduct of the late clerk, whose habits of intemperance for a long time disqualified him for the performance of his duties ; but whose practices were too confirmed, to profit from admonition, or to be eradicated by reproof. He was counselled to resign, and for his meritorious services you allowed him a pension which he enjoyed until his death. The late matron, who, by her own confession, according to the evidence of your present matron, given before the committee of the House of Commons, "had never interfered with the management of the patients, but had left it to the keepers."\* This lady has been rewarded with a pension. The steward of the old hospital, during whose unfortunate superintendence a female patient became pregnant by a keeper, which involved the hospital in considerable expense—this steward had been censured by the committee, reprimanded by the court, and his gratuity suspended. During his administration, Hadfield, the maniac, who shot at His Majesty, was suffered to escape.—The same defective inspec-

\* Vide parliamentary report, 1815, page 60.

tion allowed another lunatic to impregnate two females, daughters of your laundry-maid, and enabled the same adventurous maniac, by corrupting the servants, to traverse the streets of the metropolis whenever he pleased, although he had been committed to your custody by the Secretary of State. When this steward retired from office, with unsettled accounts, he was remunerated by a pension; and to wind up the list of your bounties:—the late porter, a shattered victim of gin and paralysis, basks in the sunshine of a pension.

Gentlemen, from the facts which I have already submitted to your perusal, you must be convinced, that the sole object of the present letter is, by a fair and manly exposition of my own conduct, to demonstrate to you and the public, that, during the long period of my continuance in your service, I strictly and conscientiously performed my duty; and that you have hitherto withheld from me that justice to which I am legally and honorably intitled. If the development I have been compelled to make should reflect on the conduct of others, I can only lament its necessity, for the advancement of truth, and for the confirmation of character. The time which has elapsed since our separation, has extinguished the desire of retaliation, and expelled the venom of resentment; but I am still free to confess, that if I did not feel some degree of honest indignation at the unworthy treatment I have received, I ought to forfeit the name of man, and lose the attributes of my species. It is reputation alone which I have sought to maintain, and I

trust the foregoing pages have fully rewarded my endeavour. Character is the holy and honorable substitute for opulence and title. It is the earliest solicitude which marks the dawn of reason—the goodly preparation of life, and the latest of our anxieties. It is that prop which keeps the man erect when age and infirmities would bow him to the earth. Like the majestic source of light, it may, for an interval, be obscured, but it cannot be extinguished. The possession of character is more precious than life itself; and by the virtuous mind is defended even at the hazard of existence. It is the immortality of this world, and the surest foundation for the hopes of a better: and as it is neither to be created by authority, nor transmitted by power, it cannot be destroyed by privileged oppression, or chartered injustice.

Gentlemen,

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN HASLAM.

1st November, 1818,

57, Frith Street.

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#### ERRATA.

Page 27, line 29, *for gentlemen, read gentleman.*

34, 15, *for Beeley, read Beeby.*

35, 2, of note from the bottom, *for CONCESSION, read a CONCESSION.*

37, *for Hayworth, read Haworth.*

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